



BROADBAND OFFICE
Office of the President and Vice President

Fort Defiance Agency Council Report
April 13, 2024
By the
NN Digital Equity Initiative Team

(NN Broadband Office, NN Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, & Americas Communication)

- **Digital Equity Initiative (DEI):** What is it and how many people in Fort Defiance Agency will be impacted?
 - The Navajo Nation Digital Equity Initiative (NN DEI) is a program launched by OPVP in coordination with the Broadband Office and the NNTRC in 2024 to harness the combined resources of the tribal government and the telecommunications industry, fostering an open collaborative approach with one overarching objective: to ensure digital parity and economic opportunities for the Navajo people by promoting 5G technology with wireless and fiber network infrastructure rivaling or surpassing any community in America.
 - The initiative will foster internet and information access for the Navajo people and public and private entities improving broadband coverage, quality, and consumer costs through competition. Ultimately, the 5G wireless and fiber infrastructure development will deliver the most advanced technology available to support vital services such as telehealth, education, commerce, and, most critically, emergency NG911 response.
 - The DEI plan will assess and address the needs of all Chapters in the Fort Defiance Agency with a 2030 goal of as well as 5G broadband connectivity and extending fiber to Telecommunications Sites Infrastructure, Chapter Houses and Community Anchor Institution.
 - Expected construction of coverage filling sites that will be available for 5G service providers by 2030
 - Crystal, Sawmill, Kin lichee, Steamboat, Jeddito, Whitecone, Teesto, Klagetoh, White Ruins, will have fiber connectivity by 2030 (~ 79 miles of fiber). All other chapters in the agency should currently have fiber connectivity.

- **2024 Connectivity Report for Fort Defiance Agency:** New Connectivity to broadband and how much fiber?
 - SBI
 - In process of adding 4G LTE to Cornfield, Dilkon and Pine Springs (one tower built is completed) funded by NTIA.
 - In process of adding 4G LTE to Lupton Chapter, Sawmill Chapter, Steamboat Chapter, Wide Ruins Chapter funded by ARPA (NNBO)
 - Choice Wireless
 - Once NTIA sites are built, Choice Wireless will add coverage in the Area of Oak Springs and add Indian Well Broadband is expected for 2024-2025.
 - ATT/FN implemented 700 MHz service since 2022 in the entire NN including the Fort Defiance Agency with high power sites providing Public Safety and Commercial Cellular service (4G)

- **New Cell Towers and Fiber:** What is the total progress made so far in expanding cell tower services in the past 14 months in Fort Defiance Agency?
 - Pine Spring and Oak Springs sites funded by NTIA, grant provided to the NN and managed by NTUA, are in approval process, ROW and EA and soon construction is expected to start.
 - A section of Fiber to Nazlini Area crosses north to Kin Lichee will be built with NTIA funding.

- **ARPA Breakdown and Fort Defiance Agency Status Report:** What are the latest developments on our ARPA Broadband allocations specific to the Fort Defiance Agency?
 - SBI was provided funding from ARPA Money to upgrade current SBI network to 4G-LTE in the area. In process of adding 4G LTE to Lupton Chapter, Sawmill Chapter, Steamboat Chapter, Wide Ruins Chapter.
 - A development plan and budget covering ARPA is underway and will be completed at the end of April (for public review) for fiber and tower infrastructure. Final RFPs will be released in May 2024. Currently the plan for full implementation is considering 8 towers, if partial funding is obtained approximately 3-4 will be built.
 - It is expected construction completion for the initial funding by 12/2026.

- **Chapter Broadband Projects Overview:** What coordination or guidance/involvement is being offered by the Nygren Administration for chapters wanting to include broadband connectivity in their plans?
 - They can reach out to the NN Digital Equity Initiative team and broadband office. Contact info at www.broadband.navajo-nsn.gov.
 - Working with Arizona Commerce to optimized development of BEAD program, NTIA program manages by state to Arizona to provide physical connectivity via fiber or wireless to every Navajo Nation household and CAIs.
 - Coordinating RFP writing providing technical assistance according to needs and budget
 - Provide assistance on delegate region funding allocation

- **Other AZ Broadband news and tower regulations next steps/status detail.**
 - The DEI team is currently working with the Navajo Land Department on policy that will enable rapid infrastructure development.
 - Lay the foundation for the optimization of BEAD funding.

- **Challenges:**
 - The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a federal subsidy program that provides a \$75 broadband service subsidy to qualifying households will expire on April 30th, 2024, unless Congress approves a reappropriation.
 - Improving communication and data sharing between the NN Broadband efforts and the community
 - The DEI is developing a dashboard for the public to view current broadband projects and project status on a regional level.

 - DEI Team and the NNBO will lead the BEAD initiative that will enable fiber or fixed wireless connectivity to ALL Household and CAI with the FT Defiance Agency.

Contact Us

www.broadband.navajo-nsn.gov

Sonia Nez, NN Broadband Office Department Manager
sonianez@navajo-nsn.gov

Bernardo Portilla, Americas Communication CEO
bportilla@americasrf.com